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UT College of Social Work

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Spring/Summer
2005

Stimulus

The Alumni Newsletter for The University of Tennessee College of Social Work

The College of Social Work Contributes to International Day at the College of Veterinary Medicine

by Betsy DeGeorge

Media Enhanced Report

Contents

<i>Media Enhanced Report: The College of Social Work Contributes to International Day at the College of Veterinary Medicine.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Phyllis Betz Retires.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Letter from the Dean.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>BSSW Students Participate in CANSTRUCTION® Competition..</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>The College Welcomes Four New Faculty Members.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Nooe Plans Retirement.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Robinson Honored with Endowment.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Spring Highlight on Research.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>College of Social Work Faculty Publications 2003–2005.....</i>	<i>8-11</i>
<i>SWORPS Partners with Child Support Employment and Parenting Program.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Photo Gallery.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Sowers and Dulmus Publish New Best Practices Journal.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>The Department of Children's Services Funds New Scholarship.....</i>	<i>15</i>

Against a backdrop of flags from many nations, food from across the globe, and a map of the world with pins indicating the homes of individuals who are part of the College of Veterinary Medicine, a diverse group of people came together to celebrate "All Roads Lead to Knoxville," the inaugural observance of International Day.

On January 7, 2005, professionals and students spent the afternoon focusing on the various routes that have led from Scotland, Hungary, Egypt, India, Ethiopia, Australia, Sri Lanka, and many other countries to the University of Tennessee, where they have found a common environment for the study and practice of veterinary medicine.

Diversity is an issue that is close to the heart and concern of Dr. Elizabeth Strand, PhD, LCSW, an alumna of the College of Social Work who serves as Director of Veterinary Social Work Services at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), which has one of the most diverse populations on the university campus.



Dr. Elizabeth Strand, PhD, LCSW ('03) and Director of Veterinary Social Work Services, introduces Dean Sowers and Veterinary School Dean Michael Blackwell.

Dr. Strand is part of the visionary leadership team for International Day. She, along with Stephanie Swain, executive assistant to dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, conceived the event and worked on many of the program details. This is not Strand's first effort to promote racial and ethnic understand-

ing. While a doctoral student she played an active role leading Study Circles Against Racism (SCAR).

A featured event of the occasion, a joint project of the colleges of social work and veterinary medicine, was a roundtable discussion between Dr. Karen Sowers, CSW dean, and Dr. Michael Blackwell, CVM dean. Both speakers expressed insightful views as they spoke to the advantages and challenges of diversity on the college campus and in the world. (This article is media enhanced. Go to the Web site of the College of Social Work at <http://csw.utk.edu> to see portions of this roundtable discussion that are provided via streaming video.)

continued on page 5

Interested in Obtaining a PhD in Social Work?

The UT College of Social Work's PhD Program offers specialized training in research methods with a focus on direct practice and management and community practice issues. It also

- ◆ Provides access to world-class faculty doing research on the culture and climate of human service agencies, child neglect, foster parenting, juvenile justice, gerontology, antisocial behavior, and school social work.
- ◆ Features guaranteed three-year stipends and fee waivers and student health insurance.
- ◆ Provides offices and computers with access to the Web for all PhD students.
- ◆ Presents opportunities to work with Children's Mental Health Services Research Center researchers.
- ◆ Is located in Knoxville, a region with a low cost of living and pleasant yearly climate.
- ◆ Is home to two CSWE Minority Fellows.

If you are interested in joining the College of Social Work's PhD Program or for further information, please contact

Dr. William R. Nugent, Chair
PhD Program
The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work
Henson Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996-3333
Phone: 865-974-6481
Fax: 865-974-6437
Email: wnugent@utk.edu

Phyllis Betz Retires from the College after Almost Three Decades of Service

by Kathy Perkey

Phyllis Betz, a field coordinator for the College of Social Work, will be retiring May 31, 2005, after working almost 29 years in the field of social work. Phyllis began her career in social work in 1976, when she joined the University of Tennessee Office of Continuing

Education, now known as the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service.

In 1981, she started working with Child and Family Services and in the fall of 1989, she joined the UT College of Social Work.

She began working as a field coordinator for the bachelor's and master's programs, but in 2001, she turned all of her focus on the bachelor's program. In that role she is responsible for recruiting students and helping with admissions.

Phyllis is looking forward to retirement and the opportunity to spend time with her soon-to-be husband, Clinton Allison, a retired professor from the UT College of Education. They plan to marry this summer and are eager to spend time traveling and relaxing. Phyllis is already planning some exciting adventures, including visits to Scotland and the Amazon. In addition, they plan to spend some time relaxing at Clinton's vacation

cottage, which is located on the bay of Nova Scotia, Canada. Phyllis says she looks forward to watching whales from her front porch.

Phyllis plans to continue being involved in the social work field by doing volunteer work. She expressed interest in reading to children and helping at homeless shelters.

Phyllis stated that she "wouldn't trade her time at the College for anything in the world." She added that she is "so grateful for having the opportunity to work

with such fabulous students, faculty, and staff." She treasures her experiences and all that she has learned while working at the College.

Dean Karen Sowers stated, "Phyllis Betz has been a mainstay in our field office. She has provided important leadership and helped to shape one of the most important parts of our curriculum. She has been dedicated to our college, our students, and our community. She will be deeply missed at the college."

The College wishes Phyllis all the best in her retirement.

Kathy Perkey is a Publications Specialist for SWORPS



@ Don't Miss Out on the Latest News!@

The UT College of Social Work has a listserv for alumni and friends. To sign up and start getting emails about the current happenings in the College, go to <http://listserv.utk.edu/archives/csw-af.html>

Letter from the Dean



As we end another academic year I am reminded once again of the many accomplishments of the College. The Social Work Office of Research and Public Service has completed a needs assessment of the region for Nine Counties. One Vision. This valuable resource has become a cornerstone for planning for the United Way

Organization's area agencies and social service planning bodies. (Go to www.ninecountiesonevision.org to access the needs assessment.) Drs. David Patterson and Roger Nooe continue their work on developing a management information system for the homeless, which will provide important assistance to organizations serving that population. Dr. Charles Glisson, director of the College's Children's Mental Health Services Research Center, is continuing to provide assistance to rural counties in juvenile justice practice and services. These are only some of the many important projects conducted by our faculty to help inform social work practice.

For additional programs and projects, please see page 7.

At the end of this academic year, Phyllis Betz, BSSW Field Coordinator, and Roger Nooe, Professor at Knoxville, will be retiring. We wish both Phyllis and Roger well and thank them for their dedicated service to the College.

This year the College is embarking on several new initiatives. The faculty are currently engaged in revising for the master's curriculum; led by Dr. David Dupper, faculty are investigating innovative curriculum content and methods of delivery to craft a new curriculum for the 21st century. In keeping with the University's new Diversity Plan, Dr. Stan Bowie is leading a College faculty committee in the development of a diversity plan for the College. Dr. Muammer Cetingok is providing leadership for the College's new initiative in internationalism and intercultural awareness. As these new initiatives develop, we will keep all of you posted. As always, your input and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

A special thanks to all of you who support us with your time and your donations. We are a better place because of you!

Ann M. Souers

BSSW-SWO Creates "CANelot: Defense Against Hunger" for CANSTRUCTION



Until hunger is defeated, contend the students, "in short there's simply not a more congenial spot than CANelot." The students sculpted a 6 ½ by 8 by 4 ½ foot high castle using 2,640 cans of soup, 24 cans of tomato paste, four cases of split peas, two cases of lima beans, 35 packs of gravy mix, along with raisin boxes, gum packages, and a variety of spices and condiments.

sponsored the Knoxville CANstruction event. She expressed her appreciation to the students, saying, "On behalf of the American Institute of Architects East Tennessee Chapter we appreciate the creative entry that the College of Social Work provides each year to the CANstruction event. Through all of the participants' hard work and careful planning the community receives an artful arrangement of cans on display for a week and Second Harvest receives much needed food for the local food bank. It provides an opportunity for team building from the design process, to fund raising, to building the project, all the way to dismantling the sculpture for Second Harvest to pick up. It is wonderful that the College of Social Work has chosen CANstruction as one of their yearly projects."

Across the nation over 60 cities now sponsor CANstruction events, generating the donation of over a million pounds of food to local emergency service providers. Teams judged best in local competition are entered in the national CANstruction competition. This year, the social work entry was named "Juror's Favorite" and will compete in this category at the 9th National CANstruction Competition during May in Las Vegas, Nevada. The students' success was further honored as a picture of the "CANelot" castle was featured on the cover of the Winter 2005 issue of The New Social Worker journal.

—Betsy DeGeorge

Hunger is not usually a media event. But from November 3 to 8, 2004, in the West Town Mall of Knoxville, Tennessee, hunger made the headlines as students from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work and other community groups competed in an unusual building project to draw attention to the plight of the hungry. CANstruction® is a national competition sponsored by the Society of Design Administration and the American Institute of Architects. Organizations construct thematic structures from canned foods and non-perishable packaged goods. The "sculptures" are then judged and winners compete in the national contest.

This was the fourth year that UT's Baccalaureate Student Social Work Organization (BSSW-SWO) participated in CANstruction. This year's project, called "CANelot: Defense Against Hunger" found inspiration in the musical play *Camelot*.

The legendary castle symbolized the provision of help for the hungry of the world. A drawbridge stood to represent welcome to those in need.

After a week of exhibition, supplying a visual "feast" for the eyes, the giant exhibits are dismantled and all of the food products are donated to Second Harvest Food Bank. The cost of the items used in the SWO entry was over \$1,200.00. This was converted to immediate value for needy people in the Knoxville area. Last year an average of 3,000 pounds of food per entry was donated to Second Harvest.

Approximately 30 BSSW students were involved in this project. Participation ranged from fund raising to transporting cans and food products, to building and dismantling the structure.

Jacene England of Michael Brady, Inc., AIA, chaired the committee that

The College Welcomes Its New Faculty Members

by Kirche Rogers

Dr. Rebecca Bolen

Rebecca (Becky) Bolen, PhD, MSSW, is an assistant professor at the Knoxville campus. She



teaches master's level courses. Dr. Bolen served as assistant professor at the Boston University School of Social Work prior to joining the

college's faculty. She taught master's level courses including Human Behavior, Child Sexual Abuse, and Research and doctoral level courses including Sociology of the Social Work Profession and Multivariate Statistics. Dr. Bolen was a graduate teaching assistant, graduate research associate, and tutor to 35 doctoral students at the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work.

Dr. Bolen received the 2004 Chancellor's Award to Pursue External Funding in the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Applied Social Sciences. She has published numerous articles focusing on topics such as using Web databases to introduce social work content in research courses, nonoffending mothers of sexually abused children, child sexual abuse, professional social education in child welfare, and Macromedia Authorware. She has also published chapters in several edited books and volumes and serves on the editorial board for the *Journal of Technology in Human Services*.

Dr. Bolen received her PhD from the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work, her MSSW degree from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work in Nashville, a Master of Music degree from Southern Methodist University, and a BS degree from Texas Women's University.

She states that she is very happy to be in the College and really enjoys the faculty: "I look forward to contributing to the College, I appreciate the resources the College and University have to offer, and I feel well placed to continue my research."

Dr. Geraldine Faria, Associate Dean, Knoxville

Geraldine (Jerry) Faria, PhD, ACSW, has been named associate dean of the Knoxville campus.



Prior to being named associate dean, Dr. Faria served as director of the School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology at the

University of Akron. She also was a member of the faculty of the School of Social Work there.

Dr. Faria taught a wide variety of courses at the University of Akron, including Social Work Practice and Human Behavior and the Social Environment. She also developed and taught special topics courses including Gay and Lesbian Issues and Social Work and Spirituality.

From 1980–1987, Dr. Faria served as assistant professor and Wichita Program Coordinator at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare–Wichita Program. Before entering the field of higher education, Dr. Faria had established her own private practice.

She has published numerous works on a variety of topics such as technology and teaching, support for the mentally ill, family-based practice with lesbian families, and women and abortion.

Dr. Faria received her PhD in Social Work from the University of Denver. She also has a certificate from the Gestalt Training Center of San Diego, an MSW from the University of Connecticut, and a BA in Psychology from Rhode Island College.

Her main goals as associate dean of the Knoxville campus are to facilitate curriculum reform; to increase diversity in the college; and to strengthen college-community relationships. She looks forward to her work as associate dean. "The faculty is highly talented, and the dean is great at providing resources and support," she said. "I believe I can make a substantial contribution to the growth of the college."

New to the South, Dr. Faria says that in her spare time, she hopes to acclimate herself to the area.

Dr. J. Camille Hall

Camille Hall, PhD, LCSW, recently joined the Knoxville campus faculty as an assistant



professor. Prior to joining the college's faculty, Dr. Hall worked as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Arkansas at

Little Rock School of Social Work and at the Smith College School of Social Work in Northampton, Massachusetts. From 2000–2001 she also worked as a clinician at the Centers for Youth and Families in Little Rock, Arkansas. Prior to that she worked as a social worker in Millington, Tennessee. She has worked in a variety of settings including Youth Home, Inc., in Little Rock,

the New Mexico Public Defender Department, the Las Cruces Mental Health Center, and the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department.

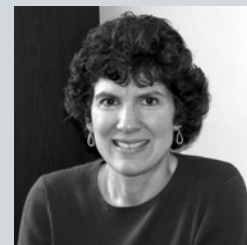
Dr. Hall served as co-editor of a special issue of the *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* and is in the process of publishing several articles in refereed journals. Her research focuses on African-American adult children of alcoholics.

Dr. Hall received her PhD from the Smith College School of Social Work, an MSW from New Mexico State University, and a BSW from New Mexico State University.

She looks forward to her work with the college and says, "The CSW has generously provided the resources and support that will guarantee my success in the academy."

Rebecca Jackson

Rebecca Jackson is coordinator of field services for the MSSW program at the



Knoxville campus. She is responsible for the development, coordination, and supervision of field

placements for all MSSW students. She also teaches the interviewing skills lab and supervises field consultants.

Prior to joining the University of Tennessee, Jackson worked as a volunteer coordinator for the John Tarleton Home for Children in Knoxville from 1998–2004. In that position she was responsible for recruiting, screening, orienting, and supervising all of the agency volunteers.

Jackson also worked as the director of the Centennial Project at the John Tarleton Home for Children and served in other positions there, including administrator and social worker. She also taught at the Center for English Language Learning at Maryville College.

A member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers, Jackson received her MSSW degree from the University of Tennessee in 1983. While she was a student, Jackson received the Hilton A. Smith Fellowship and the Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Professional Promise. She received a BA degree in Foreign Affairs and Religious Studies from the University of Virginia in 1977.

Kirche Rogers is a Publications Specialist for SWORPS

Dr. Roger Nooe Plans Retirement

Longtime professor Dr. Roger Nooe will be retiring from the College of Social Work on June 30, 2005. Dr. Nooe began working for the College in 1975 as the Knoxville branch director, a title now known as associate dean. During his tenure at the College, Dr. Nooe has focused most of his teaching on clinical concentrations. He has taught clinical practice with students and has been very active in social work forensics. One of the characteristics of his teaching has always been to work in small practices with his students, which he feels enhances the teaching and allows the students to gain more from the experience.

Fortunately for the College, during his retirement Dr. Nooe will continue teaching his psychopathology class and will help the College develop a forensic social work specialization. He will also continue co-chairing the Knoxville mayor's task force against homelessness, with which he has been very active during the past

few years. He plans to continue his work with the Knoxville public defenders office. In the midst of all this, Nooe does intend to find time to do a little golfing and traveling in the Smoky Mountains.



Reflecting on his experiences, Dr. Nooe stated, "I'm very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of wonderful students. It has been very rewarding to see these students that I worked with receive degrees in social work and go out in the community and use the skills that

they learned."

Karen Sowers, dean of the College, states, "Roger Nooe has provided critical leadership to our College over the years.

He has been the rock upon which our clinical curriculum was built. His contributions to the community have been enormous, and Knoxville and the College of Social Work are better places because of him. Fortunately, Roger will continue to work with the College after his retirement. He will continue to teach some and he will continue to provide leadership in the formulation of a specialization in forensic social work. I am grateful that he will remain connected to the College. He is one of a kind; Roger Nooe is irreplaceable."

The College wishes Dr. Nooe the best during his retirement.

—Kathy Perkey

 continued from page 1

International Day at the College of Veterinary Medicine

The discussion of diversity is sometimes approached from a negative point of view, stated Dr. Strand, who moderated the International Day program. This event was designed to be a celebration of the beauty and value of diversity. Dr. Sowers, whose childhood included the experience of living in many different countries as the daughter of a military chaplain, spoke to the need within our society for embracing opportunities to be influenced by people and events outside of our own sphere of familiarity.

International Day is part of a broader partnership that exists between the two colleges and that is being developed through the program of Veterinary Social Work Services (VSWS). As director of the

program, Dr. Strand works to fulfill a fourfold mission: to provide clinical social work services to animal owners, students, faculty, and staff; to provide



Participants from many countries enjoyed sharing information.

education on the human-animal bond; to conduct research on the human-animal bond and the human

side of veterinary medicine; and to engage in service to the community through representation on boards and task forces dealing with issues of abuse, domestic violence, and animal companionship, as well as through other means of educational outreach.

One of less than a dozen programs of its kind in the United States, the VSWS is breaking new ground each year. More than just a grief counseling program for bereaved pet owners, VSWS envisions extended services such as home visiting, the establishment of best practice through a certificate program in veterinary social work, and a broadening base of field service placements for BSSW students pursuing careers in veterinary social work.

Betsy DeGeorge is the Publications Manager for SWORPS.

Betty Robinson, MSSW ('90), Honored with Endowment

In December 2004, Betty Robinson received a birthday present that will truly stand the test of time. To her surprise, her son Charles pledged \$25,000 to the College of Social Work to create an endowment in her name. When fully funded, the Betty M. Robinson Fellowship Endowment will provide an annual stipend for a graduate student in the master's program.

"When your child does something like that, you're always overwhelmed with emotions," Robinson said. "It was a great surprise. I feel honored that my son would establish an endowment in my name, and it thrills me to think that students will be the recipients."

The gift was especially appropriate given Robinson's long history of involvement in the social work profession. She received her Master's Degree in social work from UT, and she has years of experience working as a LCSW in both family- and child-practice. In addition, she serves as chair of the Board of Visitors for the College.

A year and a half ago, Robinson began work as a part-time practitioner

focusing on "explosive"—that is, easily frustrated and chronically inflexible—children and adolescents. This area of work is very near to her heart. She explains: "I wanted to end my career



Dean Sowers (bottom left) and Andy Dunsmore (top left) celebrate with Charles and Kelly Robinson (middle back row and right front row, respectively) and Betty and Jim Robinson.

working with children, because that's the greatest need in our society. We need to get back to the source of our problems, and that means making a positive

change in children's lives."

Reflecting on his gift, Charles said, "I wanted to honor my mother and all that she's achieved, and I wanted to give a gift that would be there for a long time. The gift expresses my belief in what the social work graduates are doing and how important their work is."

Robinson's impact on the college has been felt for many years. "Betty has served on the college advisory committee. More recently, she has chaired the College Board of Visitors and has provided wonderful leadership and direction for the board," says Dean Sowers. She adds, "This scholarship is a wonderful tribute in honor of her commitment to the profession and to the College. Because of this scholarship, Betty's name will be linked with the College forever, and she will be supporting our students and new professionals in perpetuity. The College is blessed to have the Robinsons, and I am personally grateful for all of their support."

—Josh Reynolds

Named Giving Opportunities at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work

Endowments are permanent funds generated through donations of money or property that are held in perpetuity. Endowments support only the area for which they are designated. Increasing endowment funds within the College of Social Work builds lasting financial strength and ensures academic quality. Once established, a balanced endowment portfolio provides ongoing support for a wide variety of important endeavors. Teaching and research, student scholarship assistance, academic programs, and other institutional activities can all be positively sustained through a healthy endowment program.

The University of Tennessee provides a very unique and satisfying avenue for giving through named endowments. Based upon a pre-established scale of giving, donors can choose to permanently link their names or the name of someone they wish to honor with a particular institutional designation. The levels of named endowment opportunities are:

Naming of College, School, Department, or Center.....	Requires consultation with development office. May require Board of Trustee approval.
Named Endowed Chair.....	\$2,000,000
Named Distinguished Professorship.....	\$1,000,000
Named Professorship.....	\$500,000
Named Faculty Fellowship.....	\$250,000
Named Faculty Award.....	\$100,000
Named Scholarship or Graduate Fellowship.....	Minimum of \$25,000
Other named endowed fund.....	Minimum of \$25,000

Spring Highlight on Research

Evidence-Based Social Work: Connecting Research to Practice

by Catherine N. Dulmus, PhD

The College of Social Work faculty continue to conduct cutting edge research to advance the growth of evidence-based social work knowledge. Evidence-based social work involves utilizing practice guidelines and interventions with empirical support for effectiveness as the first intervention of choice when working with clients. In our continuing effort to connect research to practice, we are pleased to share the findings from two faculty studies in this issue of *Stimulus*.

Assisted Living Facilities' Response to Residents' Mental Health Needs: Dr. Sherry Cummings

Assisted living facilities (ALFs) are the most rapidly growing type of residential care for the elderly in the United States. However, little is known about facilities' responses to residents' mental health needs. A survey of the administrators of two different types of assisted living facilities in the state of Tennessee—Assisted Living Care Facilities (ALCFs) and Homes for the Aged (HFAs)—was conducted. A total of 281 administrators of ALFs in Tennessee (86%) responded to the survey. Results indicate that 94% of the facilities house residents with mental health disorders. Of these facilities, 75% reported they have residents who were depressed, and 63% reported having residents with anxiety disorders. The vast majority of the facilities (84%) indicated having residents with dementia/Alzheimer's Disease.

Administrators were asked about mental health training for their staff, if mental health screenings were standard for residents, and what services and referrals were provided. Although more than half of the facilities (66%) had some staff members who had received mental health training, fewer than half of the facilities (44%) indicated that professional mental health screenings were provided for residents.

These study results lead to several courses of action. Social workers employed by governmental agencies responsible for developing health care policy and those who represent the needs of older adults should work to increase policy makers' understanding of the psychosocial needs of

frail elders. This intervention could encourage the development of reasonable measures to address these needs within state ALF regulations. Social workers who are currently employed by ALFs in administrative and direct practice roles can play an active role in enhancing residents' mental health. Conducting depression screens for new residents, taking the time to seek out more isolated residents and assess their mental health functioning, becoming familiar with local mental health services and pro-actively linking residents with needed services, working to help residents move beyond simple attendance at activities so that they develop a caring support network within the facility, and providing in-service training for ALF staff on mental health issues are all vital roles that social workers exercise in support of the mental health of frail ALF elders.

Evaluation of a Relative Foster Care Culturally-Centered Mentoring Group: Dr. Gregory Washington

This pilot study proposed a culturally-centered intervention and evaluated its influence on at-risk African-American male youths, age 10–14, who participated in a relative caregiver program in Tennessee. The study examined the influence of a culturally specific mentoring group on the spiritual orientation and drug attitudes of six impoverished African-American male youth. The group milieu included the incorporation of the Nguzo Saba, seven African value-laden principles proposed as guidelines for healthy African-American development. Spirituality is such a value and is defined as a nurturing interrelated aspect of meaningful human relationships. It is a constant theme in the weekly principles articulated by the mentors via discussion and activities.

The preliminary evaluation outcome results indicate an increase in the spiritual orientation and level of healthy drug attitudes among the participants 10 weeks after exposure to the intervention. In addition, the results of the post-intervention interviews with the relative caregivers indicate perceptions that the functioning of

the participants in school and at home had improved in the areas investigated.

These outcomes add to the knowledge base relevant to prevention programs that promote Afrocentric values such as spirituality in an effort to reduce behavioral health risk factors among African-American male youth. Results suggest that practitioners should integrate cultural strengths into their evidence-based work with at-risk African-American male youth. These strengths include 1) values that have been proven central to African-American resilience in the face of poverty/oppression and 2) positive African-American males as mentors for African-American male youth.

Dr. Catherine N. Dulmus is an associate professor in the College of Social Work

Is the Management and Community Practice Post-Master's Certificate Program Right for You?

The Post-Master's Certificate Program is designed for persons with Master's degrees who specialized in a clinical concentration and now either find themselves in management or administration or would like to prepare themselves to move into management or community practice positions. Participants must complete 15 hours of coursework, including three required courses and two elective courses in management and community practice. Coursework may be taken on a part-time, flexible basis. The program is available at our Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis locations.

Contact program coordinator Dr. Rod Ellis at 615-256-1885 or rellis5@utk.edu for more information.

The University of Tennessee College of Social Work

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Join the College for the Fifth Annual Homecoming Gala!

This year's Gala will be held on Friday, November 11, starting at 6:30 PM—the evening before UT's homecoming football game with the University of Memphis. Watch for more details on the College Website: <http://www.csw.utk.edu>

The Gala will include an evening of dinner, dancing, and live entertainment provided by The Jimmy Church Band. Tickets are available for \$30.00 per person, and the purchase of a Gala ticket entitles the attendee to also purchase a homecoming football game ticket.

For more information, contact Karla Edwards at 865-974-6693 or email galainfo@gwmail.utk.edu

Employment and Parenting Program and SWORPS Partner to Help Non-Custodial Parents Play Positive Roles in Their Children's Lives

by Josh Reynolds

David* had given up hope. He was 14 years delinquent on making child support payments—for a child he had not seen since birth. On top of that, he had been apprehended for driving on a suspended license and as a result was now cut off from earning extra money as a farm laborer. He did not have a high school diploma. He couldn't read or write. Things looked so bleak that he decided to turn himself in and "just go to jail."

Fortunately, child support court referred him to the Child Support Employment and Parenting Program (CSEPP), a program that helps non-custodial parents gain economic self-sufficiency, improve compliance with their child support obligations, and play a more positive role in their children's lives. That's when things started to turn around for him.

"When David first came into our office, we knew we had a hard one to work with," says Sabrina Haddow, one of CSEPP's coordinators. "He had a poor attitude. He said he was not ever planning on paying his child support."

Overcoming Barriers

Through intensive one-on-one work, Haddow and fellow coordinator Matthew Keller set about to win David's trust and address the barriers to economic self-sufficiency. They worked with authorities in two states to get outstanding driving infractions resolved. With a reinstated license, he was able to take an additional job to make more money to better support his family. The coordinators helped David cope with the pain of not having a relationship with the child he was supposed to help support. He began to accept the fact that paying child support is not a choice for him to make—it's an obligation.

David requested that his employer begin taking child support payments from his check. He has been paying for eight months now. His employer stated, "I don't know what you have done but David's whole attitude has changed."

**Name changed*

Utilizing Community Resources

CSEPP, a partnership among the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child Support Services of Tennessee, and the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS), is predicated on the hypothesis that a community, such as Knox County, that enjoys a wide variety of social services and employment centers can impact the lives of non-custodial parents by utilizing already available social service networks, coupled with one-on-one support.

The program helps non-custodial parents in Knox County overcome barriers to employment. Program staff assess participants and refer them to the appropriate services in the community. After referrals are made, coordinators continue to support the clients until they become self-sufficient and are able to have more positive involvement in the lives of their children. CSEPP provides job search and parenting classes for clients who are not working. Since its inception in January 2004, the program has served a total of 221 individuals; 67 are currently active in the program.

"People who come to us are hoping we can help with employment, but we also try to help with other issues—housing, health care, food stamps, drug and alcohol treatment programs," says Haddow.

Like David, many CSEPP participants face steep barriers to employment and stability. Some have a criminal background; half enter the program with no high school diploma or GED and little stable work history; many are "couch homeless," staying with friends or family, here and there. Many cite some instance of mental health problems such as depression and suicidal thoughts; many are substance abusers.

Building Trust with Clients

"When non-custodial parents first step into the CSEPP office," Haddow explains, "many have an overwhelming lack of trust with the child support system. They believe that the system is against them, that no one there will help them. When we explain that the program is there to help them overcome barriers, a lot of them don't believe us at first. It takes a lot of time to break through those barriers."

"So many non-custodial parents are

shocked that we're actually trying to help them, instead of 'collect, collect, collect,'" Keller says. "To see the look on some of their faces, it's like 'You're giving me something, and I don't have to return it?' That seems to motivate folks a lot."

Keller is emphatic in asserting that the key to their success is a consistent, one-on-one approach. "Lots of folks need one-on-one attention. I try to be consistently available to clients, either through class, visits, phone calls. I get tons of phone calls. One of the things that makes this most successful is our intense involvement with clients. We let them know we believe in them."

SWORPS Plays a Key Role

SWORPS staff have worked with CSEPP partners at every stage of the program, from implementation by establishing preliminary guidelines and program structure, and setting up and maintaining the program's database, to evaluation of program outcomes. SWORPS analysts have prepared quarterly reports. Currently, SWORPS staff are using administrative data to provide descriptions of trends in the program, such as activity and numbers of client referrals. SWORPS analysts are also measuring program outcomes by assessing changes in employment and child support payment patterns.

CSEPP is funded as a 17-month pilot program. The CSEPP staff hopes to see the program become permanently funded and granted funds for a larger staff. Says Haddow, "If we had more staff to work with, it's possible that we could work more intensely with people. Still, we do really well with what we have."

"We have served and given hope to a population that has been totally neglected," Keller states, "and I feel like we've made a difference in some important lives. Some lives have been changed by our program."

One of the CSEPP clients put it this way: "I would have never believed child support would help me like this."

Josh Reynolds is the Publications Coordinator for SWORPS

Photo Gallery

1



1. The tailgate crew for the UT/Notre Dame game. From left to right on the back row: Dean Sowers, George Willard, Joe Caldwell, Julie Hamlin, Stacy Jowers, David Chalpin, Gay Chalpin. On the front row: Mary Catherine Willard, Bret Chalpin, Dan Caldwell

6



5. Director of Development and Alumni Affairs Andy Dunsmore (left) and Dr. Charles Glisson (right) with David, Gay, and Bret Chalpin (center, back to front). Gay brought her family back to Knoxville for the UT/Notre Dame game. Dr. Glisson chaired her dissertation committee.

2



2. Dean Sowers with 1996 PhD graduate Gay Chalpin and her son Bret before the UT/Notre Dame game.

3



3. Dean Sowers was joined by Jim and Betty Robinson and Ralph Green at the Cotton Bowl.

7

7. Jack Williams, vice president for development for The University of Tennessee, addresses the Board of Visitors at the annual fall meeting.



8



8. Faculty and alumni enjoy themselves at the College's annual holiday event.

4



4. Dr. Alex Washington, PhD ('01), spends time with current doctoral students Shakira Kennedy, Andridia Mapson, and Binta Alleyne (l. to r.) at the college's reception at the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) annual program meeting in New York City.

5



5. The College's Board of Visitors gather at the annual fall meeting. Pictured are (l. to r.) Dan Caldwell, Libby McColl, Geraldine Faria, Dona Diftler, Mary Catherine Willard, Jack Williams, Louise Harrison, Farrell Cooper, Terry Stulce, Andy Dunsmore, Betty Robinson, Elliott Moore, Earl Medley, Betsy Child, Carol Tindell, Tommy Perkins, Rebecca Henderson, Jim Henry, and Karen Sowers.

9



9. Barbara White, dean of the University of Texas at Austin, leads the faculty in curriculum renewal planning.

Sowers and Dulmus Publish New Best Practices Journal

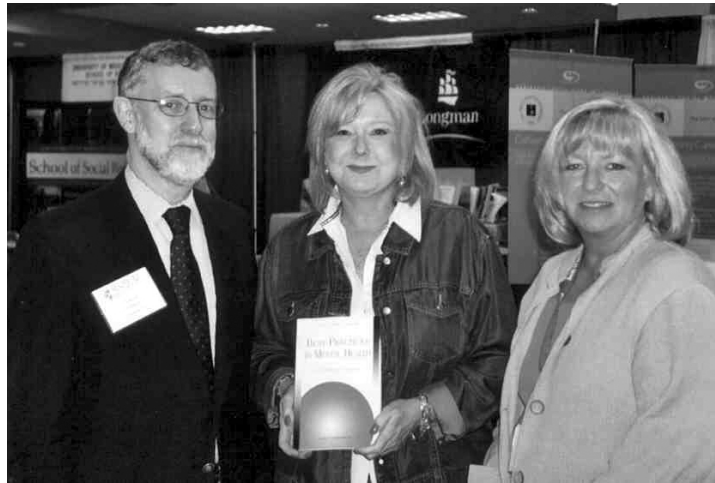
"Mental illness, behavioral disturbances, and mental well-being are critical problems across the globe," write Dean Karen Sowers and Dr. Catherine Dulmus in their letter introducing the inaugural issue of the refereed journal *Best Practices in Mental Health: An International Journal*.

January 2005 marked the publication of Volume 1 Number 1 of this new professional journal developed by Sowers and Dulmus. The journal will be published twice a year by Lyceum Books, Inc.

By having a highly skilled and hand-picked international editorial board, the journal is acting upon the National Institute of Mental Health's priority to replicate and improve promising practices and to promote the transfer of technology. Members of the board are located around the world in countries including the United States, Indonesia, Sweden, and the Philippines.

The purpose of the journal is to disseminate information about best practices in mental health and to provide mental health practitioners the opportunity to share and learn

effective interventions from a global perspective. The journal offers mental health practitioners evidence-based practice guidance. This guidance centers around experimental designs, program evaluation, meta-analyses,



David Follmer, publisher of Lyceum Books, celebrates the inaugural issue of *Best Practices in Mental Health: An International Journal* with Karen Sowers and Catherine Dulmus.

and literature reviews. The information included in the articles presents the most current research efforts of seasoned professionals including social work professors, medical personnel, and mental health practitioners.

Sowers and Dulmus believe that "mental health clients should have the right to the most effective treatments available." Because practitioners often carry high caseloads, they lack the time necessary to educate themselves on the best treatments available. The

Best Practices in Mental Health journal presents treatments that have proven to be most effective in work with mental health clients and does so in language that will inform mental health practitioners' work. The ultimate goal is to guide practitioners toward providing successful interventions that will result in positive mental health outcomes for their clients.

Articles in the first issue concern a variety of topics including depression, substance abuse, day treatment, and migraine headaches. One article discusses best practices used in referring clients for psychiatric medication. The first article, "In-home Cognitive-Behavior Therapy

for Depression: An Adapted Treatment for First-Time Mothers in Home Visitation," presents an alternative use of cognitive-behavior therapy practiced in the home with depressed mothers. The authors conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of using this adapted method in the treatment of depression.

More information and subscription information can be found at <http://lyceumbooks.com/MentalHJournal.htm>

—Kirche Rogers

In Memory of Mary Bloch, Former Branch Director of the CSW Nashville Office

Mary Bloch, professor emeritus of the Nashville campus of the UT College of Social Work, passed away on January 30, 2005, at the age of 82. She was an honors graduate of Ohio State University, where she received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Administration and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She conducted social research at the University of Chicago, The University of Illinois, Harvard University, The University of Washington, and Vanderbilt University.

Bloch spent much of her professional career as a Professor at the Nashville Branch, where she taught research, statistics, human behavior, and ethics, and where she did thesis and field practice consultation. She taught research in the MSSW Program during an era when each graduate student was required to complete and defend an individual thesis.

From 1969 until 1972, Mary Bloch served as the Nashville Branch Director (a position now known as Associate Dean). She retired in 1988 after 31 years of

service. She was thoroughly versed in curriculum development and renewal and was a leading participant when reaccreditation documents were developed for CSWE site visits.

She was a close friend to Hiasaura Rubenstein, another emeritus professor who is now retired and living in Nashville. The two co-edited a highly acclaimed volume titled *Things That Matter: Influences on Helping Relationships*. This text was widely used in social work educational programs around the country.

DCS Consortium Initiates Child Welfare Certification Program and Scholarship

by Margot Kline

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services, in collaboration with a consortium of social work schools around the state, has established a new child welfare certification program. This initiative represents a growing commitment to attracting more professionally trained social workers to the state child welfare system. "We've got to move . . . to a staff that has the professional degree that is appropriate to the kind of work that we do," stresses Viola Miller, Tennessee's Commissioner of Children's Services.

Miller believes that the long-term benefits of this statewide program will be well worth the investment. Right now, approximately 4,000 DCS workers in Tennessee handle child abuse and neglect, family crisis, and foster care and adoption cases. Although many of those workers are highly skilled and some have social work degrees, a large number of workers start with little or no specific training in crisis intervention, family systems, or social services.

Beginning at UT-Knoxville in the fall of 2005, DCS will also offer in-state tuition and a living-expense stipend for qualifying BSSW social work students who take part in the child welfare certification program. In turn, each scholarship recipient will make a commitment to work for DCS for at least two years after graduation.

Although the certification program will be offered to all BSSW students who choose to specialize in child welfare, the scholarship is just one of many incentives that DCS is offering to attract qualified students to the specialization. Some of the other benefits of the scholarship will include a guaranteed job with DCS following graduation,* exemption from some of the DCS new-employee training requirements, and a higher beginning salary. (All certified graduates will start at the Case Worker II

level rather than the Case Worker I level—with a starting salary approximately \$4,000 higher than at the non-certified level.)

UT-Knoxville is taking part in the certification program along with 12 other accredited BSSW social work programs in Tennessee. At UT-Knoxville, the Tennessee Child Welfare Certification Program scholarship will

"We've got to move . . . to a staff that has the professional degree that is appropriate to the kind of work that we do."

**—Viola Miller,
Commissioner of the
Department of Children's
Services**

cover in-state tuition for five full-time students and will pay a stipend of up to \$2,398 each fall and spring semester for textbooks, living expenses, and travel expenses related to the certification program. (Recipients paying out-of-state tuition at UT will receive a tuition scholarship equal to the cost of in-state tuition.) All BSSW students who take part in the certification program will be required to complete a two-year curriculum in child welfare and will participate in a DCS internship during their senior year.

UT-Knoxville students who want to be considered for the scholarship must successfully complete an application and an interview, must currently be enrolled in the College's BSSW program, and must have a minimum of four semesters remaining before graduation. Other conditions of the scholarship include:

- ◆ Completing requirements for a BSSW degree and the child welfare scholarship within two years

of beginning the certification program;

- ◆ Maintaining good academic standing and full-time status in the fall and spring semesters in which they are enrolled in the certification program;
- ◆ Attending all meetings, trainings, retreats, and conferences associated with the certification program;
- ◆ Promptly paying for any tuition, fees, or other school-related expenses that are not specified as being paid by the stipend;
- ◆ Applying for full-time employment with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services within 30 days of graduation;
- ◆ Maintaining a position at DCS in child welfare for at least two years; and
- ◆ Repaying the scholarship program the cost of tuition and stipend paid for them if failing to meet the terms of the agreement.

** Students may express a preference for where they would like to work within the state, but they must accept a position with DCS within 6 months of graduation, regardless of location but contingent upon position availability. If DCS is unable to place a student in a job within one year of graduation, due to no fault of the student, the student shall be released from any work or financial obligation.*

To receive more information or to apply, contact Brenda Black, UT Director of Tennessee Child Welfare Certification Program, MSSW-BSSW, and Staff Development (bblack1@utk.edu or 865-974-5240); or Frank Spicuzza, Director of the BSSW program (fspicuzz@utk.edu or 865-974-3352).

Margot Kline is an Information Specialist at SWORPS and is the designer of Stimulus

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Paul Campbell—Director, Social Work Office of Research and Public Service

Charles Glisson—Director, Children's Mental Health Services Research Center

Bill Nugent—Director, PhD Program

Frank Spicuzza—Director, BSSW Program

Betsy DeGeorge—Editor

Margot Kline—Designer

Dean's Office

865-974-3176

Alumni Office

865-974-6693

UT Alumni Association

865-974-3011

Web Address

<http://www.csw.utk.edu>

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